Menstruation usually begins between the thirteenth and fifteenth years. From then on it is called *'ihâk'a-enjas*, i.e., "moon sickness," from the regularity of its occurrence. It apparently lasts three days on the average and is scanty. [Picture, Plate XII. Tuareg Menstruous Girl.] At this time they often [297] paint their faces with a dark greasy salve. (See Care of the Body, p. 310).

Those who are menstruating are not allowed in the tent, let alone to do the milking. It is difficult to get reliable information about the end of menstruation. I knew of two women who had children when 47 years of age and of another aged 55 who still had periods. In general the appearance of the climacteric does not seem to deviate from the norm for our race.

b) Marriage. *Ige-meh*, is the goal which the girl seeks. I was astonished how carefully regulated customs have still been maintained in secrecy where the ethical customs have not degenerated or have not been clothed in Christian guise. Chance observations and occasional remarks of my companions gave me the clues which I had only to pursue with patience to find out the remnants of original folkways that are still well preserved under the varnish of semi-civilization.

A man who wishes to find out if a girl reciprocates his feeling of love hands the girl of his choice a little stick. If they are both in agreement, they break the little stick, each holding on to one end, and throw the broken stick towards each other's breast. The man is now the *'saob* of the girl, the girl the *'tase* of the man. They then enter into a love relationship as the word *tag* - to be ashamed) indicates and as the old custom actually demands, which places on them the following duties of modesty. The betrothed may not speak to each other nor hand each other things. Anything they wish to say or give to each other must be done through an intermediary, a man or a woman. Violations are expiated by atonement presents -- they are actually love tokens and so the whole thing is a game of hide and seek that has become a fixed custom.

This can continue for months, a year, or longer before the relationship becomes closer. That can then happen in two ways: openly by asking the parents or secretly by a symbolic action which indicates the girl's agreement to complete surrender. The lover takes off a skin shoe when the two of them are alone and throws it to the girl. If she leaves the shoe unnoticed, the offer of a premature union is rejected. If she wishes to accept the proposal, she returns the shoe.

Magic is also involved in intrigues of love. An effective means of separating lovers, according to the opinion of informed [298] magicians,

contained in the jumping legs of the grasshopper. A girl who is supposed to be alienated from her lover is asked -- as often happens without 584 ● 852
in daily life -- to pulverise a heap of dried buchu herbs. A grasshopper leg has been secretly crumbled up between the leaves. When the girl has finished and rubs her hands that are dusty from the buchu powder over her armpits as is customary to get them clean, she unknowingly rubs that magic potion that kills her love. In other cases the grasshopper's legs are packed deep down in the bone pipe. The pipe then makes the usual rounds and when it has been ascertained that the loving pair got one of the leg pieces to smoke, then the magic is considered a success. I also knew a case where the parents of the girl consulted a professional magician, who smeared a little stick with the contents of his poison box (see Medicine, page 226), broke the stick and threw the pieces away with the words: "/ǂâ/gu hã ǂgoaba gye ũ /gu/ta," i.e. "the two who love each other are to separate."

Before the whites became a dominant factor and destroyed the old customs, love outside of marriage was punished. Old Horsemon, who 777 834 484
still observe with misgivings present day actions, have told me that on numerous occasions, independently of each other. The guilty ones were either both thrashed with the approval of the parents or the girl's share of the punishment was transferred to the boy. The punishment was carried out under the direction of the sub-captain; in other words it was an act of public morality.

The parents of the young man undertake the wooing. Etiquette re- 584
quires a rejection of the offer, much discussing back and forth and finally according to the request. The man is not supposed to think that they were waiting for him.

The wedding is celebrated with much slaughtering. The bridegroom 585 431
or his parents must supply the festival ox (cf. folk tale XXXIV). But sometimes both families participate in the wedding slaughter, ǃgũ/ǂâs. Poor people sometimes trade their only milch cow for one that can be slaughtered in order to fulfill their wedding obligations.

On the wedding day the young man and the young woman each give their respective mothers-in-law a cow, abago/mas, in remembrance of the time when they carried the boy or girl as a baby in aba skin (see below). And because they nursed them at the breast, that wedding cow is also called °uamago/mas. The term kx̃ã/go/mas, [299] which I heard more rarely, means that something is returned (= kx̃ã/) to the mothers to which they are entitled. The present is supposed to compensate the mothers for the loss of their children.

2: Schape 1 E-4, 5 (no date) 1930
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Marriage

582 Normally a girl is not regarded as marriageable until she has reached the age of puberty and passed through the puberty ceremonies, nor was a boy in the old days permitted to marry before he had been initiated into the ranks of the adult men (a custom now fallen into abeyance). Marriage, as we have seen, might not take place between members of the same clan, nor was a man supposed to marry a woman of the same "great name" (*gei khoi /ois*) as himself, even though she might come from a tribe different from his own. Such a woman would be regarded as a mother, if much older, or as a daughter, if younger, than himself. Nowadays this prohibition has ceased to be observed; and we also find that marriage with any first cousin is permitted, even with direct cousins, although on the other hand, says Mrs. Hoernlé, the older people are resisting the marriages of first cousins at all, whether direct or cross-cousins. Marriage with the latter was formerly permitted, both with the father's sister's daughter and with the mother's brother's daughter, although in some of the Nama tribes (e.g. *//Haboben, Gei //Khauan, //Khau /Goan*) marriage with the latter kind of cross-cousin is said to have been far more usual than marriage with the former kind. It does not seem, however, that marriage with the cross-cousins was specially enjoined. Marriage with the direct (ortho-) cousins, on the other hand, was strictly prohibited.[2]

There is no single account of Hottentot marriage customs which can be regarded as exhaustive. The following description, pieced together as it is from the more or less incomplete accounts of a number of different observers, must therefore be looked upon only as approximately correct, although the details cited are all vouched for by reliable witnesses.[3]

584 As a rule there is free choice with regard to marriage, subject, of course, to the restrictions just indicated. The initiative usually lies in the hands of the boy. When he has found a suitable girl, he seeks to obtain her formal consent. He will hand her a little stick; if she takes this, breaks it in two, and throws one of the pieces at his breast, it is a sign that she is willing to marry him. The two now enter into a state of betrothal, which imposes upon them various

[1] "Social Organisation of the Nama," 21.

[2] Hahn, "Die Nama-Hottentotten," 322; von François, *Nama und Damara*, 214. Olpp, *Angra Pequena*, 26 sq.; Kohler, "Das Recht der Hottentotten," 343–4; Wandres, "Die Khoi-Khoin," 318–19; Schultze, *Namaland und Kalahari*, 297–9; Vedder, "The Nama," 134–5.

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mutual avoidances. They are not supposed to meet or speak to each other, and may communicate only through an intermediary. This period of betrothal may be of considerable duration, and it is often several months or even a year and more before the marriage actually takes place. In the meantime the necessary negotiations will be going on between their parents, the boy's people taking the lead. After the young couple have come to an understanding, two or three old women from the boy's family go to the mother of the girl, and ask for her consent. This by custom she is required to withhold. After some time, during which the boy will occasionally bring small gifts to his future parents-in-law, the proposal is renewed, the girl's father also being approached this time. Finally, after a more or less prolonged show of reluctance on the part of the girl's parents, their consent is at last obtained, and the day for the marriage ceremony fixed.

In connection with this custom of wooing, reference must be made here to the employment of love magic among the Naman. A man wishing to win the favour of a girl will pound up a certain charm known as *dubu* (a white substance the size of a fowl's egg, generally found in ant-heaps), and mix it with tobacco, which he then puts into a pipe. If the girl smokes this mixture, she will fall in love with the man who offered her the pipe.[1] Or he will secretly smear the mouthpiece of a pipe with some of the contents of a medicine-horn, smoke the pipe, and then pass it on to the girl whose love he wishes to arouse.[2]

On the other hand, magical means are also employed to separate lovers. Of these one of the most effective is found in the legs of the locust. A girl who is to be alienated from her lover is asked, as often happens in the normal course of daily life, to grind to powder a heap of dried *kuchu* roots—but among the roots a locust leg has been secreted. When the girl, having finished her task, rubs her *kuchu*-stained hands in her arm-pits as usual, she unwittingly rubs in the magical means which kills her love. In other cases locust legs are pushed into the interior of a bone pipe, which is then handed round as usual. If care is taken that both lovers smoke of it, the magic will prove effective. In another instance quoted by Schultze,[3] the girl's parents consulted a magician, who smeared a small stick with some of the contents of his medicine horn, broke the stick, and threw the pieces apart, at the same time uttering the words: "The two who love each other must separate."

[1] Hahn, *Tsuni-||Goam*, 90. [2] Schultze, op. cit., 319-20. [3] Op. cit., 297-8.

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585 The marriage is celebrated by a great feast at the home of the
583 girl's parents. On the day of the ceremony, the bridegroom has to present a cow to his mother-in-law, in token of the fact that she brought up his bride, and carried the latter whilst still a child in the *aba* skin on her back (hence the cow is termed *aba-gomas*). A similar presentation is made to his mother by the bride. The bridegroom and his people also have to provide the cows slaughtered for the marriage feast. Oxen may not be used for this purpose, lest the marriage prove unhappy and quarrelsome, whereas the use of female animals will make it fruitful. On the morning of the ceremony the cows are driven in festive procession by the relatives of the bridegroom to the home of the bride's parents. Here they are slaughtered. While the meat is being prepared, the bridegroom is fetched from his own home by two of his companions, who play on the reed pipes. All three dance up to the hut newly erected for the bride near that of her parents, in which she is waiting with some young girl attendants. Arrived there, the men dance round the hut for a while. Then the bridegroom's companions place themselves before the entrance of the hut, so that he can get in only with difficulty and by the exercise of force. As soon as he gets through and the young girls have left the hut, the mat door is lowered and secured to the ground with a stone, as a sign that entrance is forbidden. The marriage, says Hahn, is then consummated, with the knowledge of the whole camp, but without arousing any special notice. The guests meanwhile sing, pipe, and dance, and this continues all through the evening and night, the festivities only being interrupted for the great communal meal in which everybody takes part. Before the appearance of the morning star, the husband returns to his old home, where he has to stay the whole day without even seeing his wife; and only after the third or fourth day is he allowed to remain permanently with her.

584 The ceremonies of courtship and marriage just described are
585 those noticed among the Naman within fairly recent times, and in most details are apparently still practised by them where they have not been christianized. A much earlier account by Wikar of the marriage customs of the Little Namaqua tribes contains several features not noted above; and as he is on the whole a reliable and accurate observer his description deserves to be quoted as complementary to that just given.[1]

587 He states that a boy courting a girl with the intention of marriage

[1] "Berigt aan . . . den Heer van Plettenberg," 100-a.

loes not ask her directly for her consent, but *oua*'s or "seeks her" 584
n the following manner. If he is not ashamed and if his intentions
re serious, he comes at night into the hut of her parents while the
ire is still burning, and carefully notes the place where she goes to
leep. When the family all lie down to sleep, and the fire is dead,
e then goes to lie by the side of the girl. She, "if not in too much
f a hurry to have him," gets up and goes to lie in another part of
he hut. The boy, however, remains sleeping on her skin bed
ntil daybreak, when without speaking a word he gets up and goes
way. The following night he appears again. If he finds that the
girl's bed is still in the same spot, he can regard this as a sign that
is courtship is favoured by her. Even if she continues to get up
nd lie elsewhere for several nights in succession when he lies down
ext to her, this is merely to test his steadfastness; he must only
ersevere, and all will go well. When at last she remains with him,
e does not get up till broad daylight, and he leaves lying behind [301]
im a waistband of ostrich egg-shell beads for his mother-in-law,
s a gift for the use of the bed. Then, still without speaking a word,
e exchanges karosses with the girl, who also gives him *buchu* with
which to powder his head and rub his arm-pits. Then he goes away.

The official marriage feast is celebrated the same day. The bride- 585
groom must provide a sheep or a cow, which is slaughtered for the
ride. The four legs of the animal are bound together, and in this
osition it lies for an hour or more. Meanwhile all the married women
f the camp come together, and the bride is placed in their midst.
She is lectured by them on her duties as a married woman, and they
lso, as Wikar quaintly puts it, "praise men who seek wives, since
o-day they have enough to eat." The animal is then slaughtered [791]
y a magician ("tovenaar"), who must be a male. A special portion
f the meat is given to him, but he is the only male person who may
at of the animal. Not even the bridegroom may partake of it, nor
ny children or unmarried girls. The bladder of the slaughtered
nimal is then blown up and tied to the head of the girl; the fat is
trewn with *buchu* by the women, and this she must wear round her [301]
eck; while the sinews are threaded through ostrich egg-shell beads,
which she must wear round her legs.

In the meantime, the bridegroom, desirous of winning that day 583
his laurels as a hunter, is off early into the veld with his spear, bow 585
nd arrows. His quarry provides material for a general feast, which
s followed by dancing and festivity. To the mother of his bride

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583 585 he must also present two milch cows, or, if he is poor, one will do; while to her father he must also give several head of cattle. In return, however, he receives almost as many—probably in the form of dowry to the wife, who also brings with her into the marriage her own hut.[1]

585 264 The important feature of this account, apart from the circumstantial description of the wooing, is the clear evidence it provides for the holding of a special meal in which only the bride and previously-married women take part. Meals of this sort, by means of which persons entering upon a new stage of life are aggregated into the group of persons already in that stage, play an important part in almost all the social ceremonies of the Hottentots. Except in the present instance, however, there is no definite statement that such a meal accompanies marriage, although, as we shall see, its existence as an essential part of the marriage ceremony is hinted at in the careful analysis given by Mrs. Hoernlé of the transition rites ("rites de passage") of the Hottentots.

178 ● 581 585 In the case of the Cape Hottentots, all trace of the marriage ceremonies has naturally long since disappeared. For information about them we have to rely for the most part upon seventeenth and eighteenth century accounts, which as a rule leave much to be desired. The two most useful sources of this kind are Graevenbroeck and Kolb, whose descriptions again introduce several new features.[2]

1584 According to Kolb, the boy, when he has picked on the girl he wishes to marry, approaches his father, who then acts as his intermediary with her parents. If they are favourably inclined, and here again there is first a show of reluctance, the boy then for the first time directly asks the girl for her consent. If she says yes, all is well; if not, the two sleep together on the following night, when the girl has to struggle to retain her virginity. If she is successful, the suitor must depart; but if, as generally happens, she becomes tired and gives in to him, the marriage is settled, whether she is willing or not. It is not unlikely that in this episode we really have something akin to the wooing described by Wikar, but Kolb's short description of it is more romantic than exhaustive, so that the resemblance cannot be stressed.

[1] This exchange of cattle at marriage is incidentally mentioned by several later writers on the Nama, but their statements are so inadequate that its real nature cannot be determined.

[2] Graevenbroeck, "Uit den Ouden Tijd," 2–3; Kolb, *Vorgebirge der Guten Hoffnung*, 70–3; cf. Thunberg, *Travels in Europe, Africa, and Asia*, ii, 192; Dapper, *Naukeurige Beschrijvinge der Afrikaensche Gewesten, Tweede Deel*, 273.

5: Vedder M-5 (ca. 1910) 1928
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769 has to exert himself to ward off approaching death by means of
787 circumstantial ceremonies. Having performed these cere-
761 monies secretly, only after a year may he relate this dream, as
by then the time for its realisation will have expired, failing
[632] which he will be regarded as a murderer should the person
die within that year and be treated accordingly. When the
sheep get lost in the pastures, they know how to find them
by lighting a certain root at the gate of the kraal, the flames
showing the direction in which the sheep should be sought.
761 He, who heedlessly stands in the shade of a bush called "the
782 little heart-tree" is endangered by death until he has atoned
for his disrespectful behaviour by burying a piece of cloth
from his own dress, at the root of the tree.

791 4. It is clear that in these circumstances wizards and
sooth-sayers would enjoy great personal attention, find favour
and acquire riches especially in hard times; and up to the
present time all sorts of wizards, who pretend to be able to
ward off death and to cure animals by means of mysterious
remedies, are still active among the Nama; they very seldom
avail themselves of effective medicinal roots and shrubs for
they have a very scanty knowledge of the medicinal plants
of Namaland. The more mysterious is the hocus-pocus in
which he wraps his unintelligible doings, the greater the
wizard and the more firmly do they expect the wonderful
effects! There is a definite way of practising witchcraft to
reveal that which is still hidden in the dim future or is
wrapt in the veil of the past; but it seldom happens that one
comes on the track of old, original customs. What has been
heard or seen among the Bushmen, Ovambo and also among
the Malays and Mahomedans of the Cape Colony, is being
practised and has its believers.

751 The wearing of various kinds of talismans is by no means
uncommon, but one very seldom gets the impression that they
are in any way connected with ancient beliefs or superstitions.
Fangs, beads, pieces of scaly skin, roots, fruits, etc., are
regarded by them as serving to ward off diseases, to maintain
health or to deliver them from evil. As a rule these things
are worn at the breast on a thin leather strap; very often
they are tied on painful parts of the body and are then simply
called "Medicine."

751 When circumstances demand it they prepare these amu-
439 lets themselves, but they have so little confidence in their
own art that they would rather purchase them from the
Ovambo, Herero, Bergdama and especially from the Bushmen.

VII. Manners and Customs.

● 584 1. A matrimonial engagement may take place in two ways.
The parents of the young man either look for a suitable girl,
get her parents' consent, have long and by no means enjoy-
able negotiations with relatives, decide upon the date for the

5: Vedder M-5 (ca. 1910) 1928
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marriage and what should be contributed to the reception: 584
or the young man chooses for himself and then the engagement does not consist in asking her and her saying "yes" but in an action. The young man bashfully points a little stick at the girl of his choice. When she takes the stick, breaks it in two and throws the part broken off at his breast, the question is settled and they understand each other.

No matter how the engagement came about—from the day of the betrothal "separation-period" sets in. The engaged couple dare not meet each other, under no circumstances speak to each other and have to avail themselves of certain other people who have to tell the one what the other has to say. Such a period may sometimes be of considerable duration.

2. The marriage ceremony is as a rule celebrated in the 585
house of the parents of the bride in the form of a sumptuous meal, which is paid for either by the parents of the bridegroom alone or contributed to by both pairs of parents.

When after the marriage the bride comes to the village where the bridegroom stays—which may be days or even weeks after the marriage took place—another feast is held.

Since the majority of the Nama have turned to Christianity 585
the old customs have more or less ceased to exist. Christian 178
customs have been amalgamated with ancient traditional forms, whereby now the Christian and then the old characters appear at the wedding ceremonies.

3. The position of the woman among the Nama is by no 562
means that of the devoted servant of the man. According 593
to old custom the hut belongs to her and she disposes of everything within it. When in need of something the man has to approach his wife entreatingly and not imperiously. But since the old-fashioned huts which were covered with [342
rushes by the women have more and more been displaced by 423]
the modern houses, which the man builds with material for which he has laboured, the woman is being pushed into the background. The abode now becomes the property of the man and there is danger that the consequence will be ill-treatment of the woman. Whether a marriage is permanent 586
or not depends entirely on the relatives for when there are 602
among them those who blow a fire from the sparks of a small difference of opinion, it is easily broken, and the woman returns to her relatives. When on the other hand all the relations are friendly and work against a separation, such 595
a marriage is as a rule permanent. Polygamy was not uncommon with them in olden days, but under the influence of Christianity such cases are exceptions.

4. As soon as symptoms of pregnancy become visible the 843
husband has to devote special attention to his wife. In the first place he is obliged to appease her wishes for special food in order not to endanger the new life. The older women interest themselves so much in the expectant mother that

8: Dapper Q-4 (no date) 1933
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try to hit it, lest he be wounded or destroyed, as does actually happen at times. That is how the Capemen set out especially to hunt the animals just mentioned.

MARRIAGE.

Whenever a man falls in love with some girl or other, he asks permission from his father to marry her. This granted, he goes to the girl's father and mother, with the earnest request that he may have the honour of marrying their daughter. Should the parents then favour his suit, the girl finds herself, willynilly, obliged to accept him in love. She puts the fatty gut of a cow round the neck of the bridegroom, instead of a golden chain, and this he must wear until it rots away of its own accord. This in effect is a confirmation of the marriage.

Two of the fattest sheep in the whole village are then sought out and slaughtered for this newly-married couple, and dished up partly boiled, partly roasted. No one but these two people and their parents may eat of this meat, lest the marriage be not considered or accepted as binding and lawful. The skins of the sheep, cut to small pieces and the hair all scraped off, are laid on hot coals, and then, after being pounded on a stone, are eaten with great relish. The wedding does not last longer than one day, nor are any other ceremonies celebrated in connexion with marriage[75]).

The attachment and love between married, as between unmarried, people varies, just as it does with us. One finds men who have scarcely been married for half a year before they no longer care for their wives or even trouble about them, so that their mutual affection soon dies away. Others on the contrary have as great a love for their wives as can be found among any of the Dutch, and so too have the women for their husbands. As instances of true mutual love among these savages, we may mention two remarkable episodes which happened there a few years ago. In the one a widow, through sadness and grief at the loss of her husband, sprang into a pit full of wood which had been set alight, and burned herself to death. In the other, a young girl, rendered disconsolate because her parents had severely whipped her lover on finding that he had slept with her against their will, threw herself down from a rock and was smashed to pieces.

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[75]) Dapper's description of Hottentot marriage ceremonies, while confirmed in the main by the writings of other observers, is by no means complete. A far more detailed account is given by Grevenbroek (see below, p. 201).